

## Effective Merchandising

### Drum Display Techniques Selling A Dream

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

When you sell musical instruments, you're selling both an instrument *and* a fantasy. Young drummers especially have visions of being the next big rock star on a concert stage. Help them play out that dream by enabling them to check out a fully arranged kit up close, rather than fifty rows away on an arena stage or on two-dimensional music videos.

Just as guitarists need to hold the instrument in their hands, drummers need to "get personal" with the instrument they plan to buy. Whenever space permits, dealers should have drumkits set up on the floor in a playable configuration, instead of stacking them on shelves, away from the drummer's reach.

Besides allowing drummers to imagine how they would look behind a kit playing, having kits set up in a realistic way allows customers to inspect them both visually and physically. Stacking drums doesn't exactly provide an accurate visual representation of the product, much less give drummers incentive to even *consider* whether a particular drumkit is right for them. Features can't be demonstrated if the stands are folded and the tom-toms are piled up. Stacking product is okay for self-service supermarkets and tire stores, but not for drum stores. Try to relate the customer's point of view to your own when you attend a NAMM show to buy product for your store. Drumkits aren't stacked; everything is set up to be as appealing as possible to the buyer.

Some dealers have had success displaying drumkits on mini-risers. This keeps unwanted hands (and sticks) off the drums, while still retaining the fully set up, "play me" look. To complete the visual picture, all kits should have cymbals displayed.

A popular method of displaying snare drums is the utilization of a special rack. The drums can sit in the rack tiers on their sides, showing off finish, depth, and lug style, but they are still easily accessible to the serious customer.

A well-marketed store should have a representative sample of every item it stocks displayed on the sales floor and ready for customer

inspection. This "total coverage" makes the customer feel that you're serious about drums—and serious about his or her needs.

All drum customers love to take literature and catalogs home. Having catalogs available near or on the drum display makes it convenient for the customer to grab them and do "at home research." That one drum catalog sitting around on the kitchen table may be the key to a sale later, after Mom and Dad real-

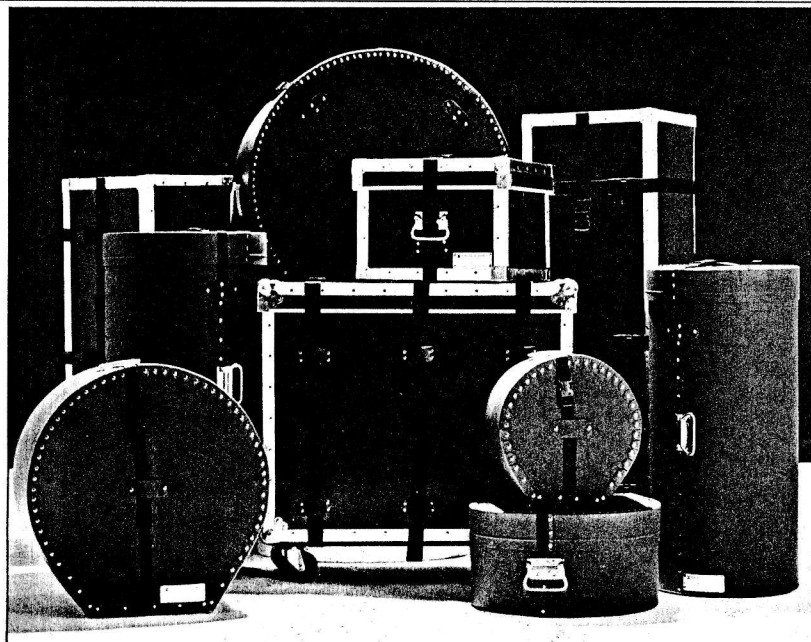
ize that Johnny has drums on his mind. Whenever possible, put a stamp or sticker with your store's name, address, and phone number somewhere on the catalog as a reminder of who to come back to for the purchase.

Literature within easy reach can be an important and effective sales tool for your employees, too—enabling them to show complete ranges of drumkits that can be ordered. All drum company cata-

logs contain superb photography, further elevating the fantasy level for the customer. Displaying manufacturers' banners and posters will add to the visibility of the product brand name, and it will identify you as an authorized, respected dealer of that specific line.

Drum sales today rely on four main points: Sound, price, cosmetics, and service (not necessarily in that order). These can all become

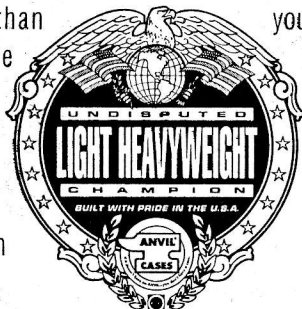
please turn to page 30



## ANVIL FIBRE CASES UNDISPUTED Light Heavyweight Champion

We started making instrument cases before anybody. And we still make them better than anybody because we take your instruments as seriously as you take your music. We combine the lightest, strongest materials with the most creative engineering and design to make the best protection you can buy – and the most economical. There may be imitators out there but there aren't any competitors.

*If it doesn't have an Anvil, you don't have a case.*



**ANVIL CASES** 1-800-FLY ANVIL  
SUBSIDIARY OF ZERO CORPORATION FAX 818-968-1703

15650 Salt Lake Avenue, City of Industry, CA 91745 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1202, La Puente, CA 91746

## What's Your Store Doing For IDM?

November 1993 marks the second annual International Drum Month, a concept that was originally conceived by the sustaining members of the Percussive Arts Society. IDM represents an industry-wide marketing and promotional campaign whose sole purpose is to promote percussion sales at the retail level. Many of the percussion manufacturers are involved, offering incentives for dealers to help promote IDM. Here's a random survey of what a few dealers are doing to promote International Drum Month:

**Evan Jones, drum dept. manager**

**Bandland, Clarksburg, WV**

"We've scheduled a two-day event with Zildjian, November 26 and 27. Customers will be given free demonstrations on a wide variety of Zildjian products. Plus, all Zildjian cymbals will be on sale for half-price. We'll also be offering IDM T-shirts."

**Ron Spaeth, drum dept. manager**  
**Ellman's Music Center, Naperville, IL**

"We're sending out a special mailer to all of our regular customers, including people who rent percussion instruments and who have recently bought big-ticket items. We're going to inform them of a month-long sale we plan to have on just about everything in the department."

**Tom Becker, drum dept. manager**

**Medley Music, Bryn Mawr, PA**

"We've come up with three different ideas for IDM: We're holding a drum marathon, where young drummers will get sponsorship to play for a charity from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. at a local school gym. We're also putting together a calendar for the month, offering different promotions for each day. Finally, we're having a "Meet The Reps" day, where customers can talk to representatives from different drum companies and get a ten percent discount on their products."

**Steve Arnold, drum dept. manager**

**Manny's Music, New York, NY**

"On November 21st we're sponsoring a drum day at SIR studios, where drummers can hear and meet Terry Bozzio, Chad Wackerman, Joe Morello, and Joe Bonadio. We'll also be offering

special prices on clinic-sponsor's equipment. Finally, we're planning to hold seminars with Roland and KAT."

**Bill Olive, owner**

**Drum Specialist, Glenview, IL**

"We're offering a free introductory drum lesson to new students. We're also selling IDM T-shirts and offering a two-for-one promo on all heads, mallets, and sticks."

**Rick "Sneeze" Fenese, drum dept. manager**

**Wagstaff Music, Murray, UT**

"Last year we had a promotion where, if customers brought other people into the store, they were given a free pair of sticks and a card to fill out. That card was then entered into a contest for a drawing where the winner received a big prize. This year we're kicking around an idea where customers would design T-shirts for the store, and we would possibly offer a prize to the winner."

If you're interested in finding out more about International Drum Month for next year, contact **Jerry Hershman, IDM, 38 W. 21st Street, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10010-6906, tel: (212) 924-9175, fax: (212) 675-3577.**

### Studio Insights—continued from page 25

choice of heads and muffling devices, the students will want to buy what's necessary to get their kits sounding the same way.

You can also use the teaching studio to expose students to new or different equipment. Consider putting a different brand of ride cymbal or hi-hats on the kit from time to time. Adorn the kit with small accessories such as cowbells, mounted tambourines, or woodblocks. I once had a student come in who had heard someone use a cowbell for a Latin pattern, and he wanted to know how to do that. So I borrowed a cowbell from out front, mounted it on the kit, and showed him a couple of ways to use it. I left the cowbell on the kit for the rest of the day, and every student who came in asked what it was for. I know for a fact that several of them bought cowbells over the next couple of months.

A similar thing happened recently when the manager of a store I teach at put a double bass drum pedal on the kit in my studio. Within a week, one of my students purchased one, and another student bought one about a month later. That led to questions about how to deal with the hi-hat when playing double bass, so we equipped the studio hi-hat with a drop-clutch assembly. Soon, the store sold a couple of those to the same two students.

Of course, now those students expect that pedal to be there permanently so they can learn to play it, but the store owner is willing to make that investment because it has already led to sales, and he is convinced that it will ultimately lead to additional sales. It also gives his teacher (me) an advantage over other teachers in town who are not equipped to teach double bass, which could draw more students, who will buy more equipment. It's a pretty good return for the (dealer's) price of a double pedal.

Considering the fact that the teaching-studio kit is the single piece of equipment in your store that students have the most exposure to, you don't want it sending a negative message in terms of your image. So take a look at those drums in your studio. Is this the kind of equipment you want representing your store and the products you sell? If not, consider upgrading it to something more likely to inspire sales. It won't hurt your lesson business, either.

*Rick Mattingly maintains an active teaching practice in Louisville, Kentucky and southern Indiana. He is the former senior editor of Modern Drummer magazine and serves on the Board of Directors of the Percussive Arts Society.*

### Effective Merchandising—continued from page 27

easily evident to your customer through proper display techniques. Unless your store's layout completely prohibits it, a serious purchaser should be able to "try out" a drumkit in order to hear its capabilities. (No "jamming" please!) Though tunings and heads may vary, the customer can get a fairly good representation of a particular drum's sound, volume, and response. If you're not a drum tuning wizard, hire a local drummer for a few hours to tune up your kits the way a player would want them sounding. List price and/or selling price should be marked via a tag or sign on the product itself as a readily available point-of-reference for "browsers" who have a certain dollar figure in mind.

A clean, uncluttered display area allows the customer to focus on a

particular product easily. Be sure your displays and showcases are dust- and fingerprint-free so the products will have extra brilliance. Certain lighting techniques can dramatically increase the desirability of a product. Walk into any jewelry store, car dealership showroom, or the like, examine their lighting, and adapt the concept to drumkits. Remember, you're selling a high-dollar item too! The cosmetic appeal of a drum or drumkit is an important factor in the customer's final decision. Fully set-up kits and sparkling displays psychologically affect the drummer/customer in a positive manner. Keep in mind that sometimes the appeal also has to spread to the person "holding the checkbook"—who may not be the end user.

Some stores end up placing their

"dog drumkit" (the one that isn't moving) in the window in hopes of attracting the one passer-by who'll rid their shop of it forever. While this may be a worthwhile inventory reduction technique for some, will the "Kit That No One Wants" really draw customers into your store? This only works if the price advertised on the kit makes it a super-incredible, lower than low, blockbuster deal-of-the-year. You're probably better off reserving your display window as the place to show off your best kit.

While price is a major concern, in this day and age, service also plays a very important part in a sale. Be prepared to offer your customer after-sales service. Drum companies will work with you to keep your customer satisfied if a problem arises. Displaying parts, drumheads,

drumkeys, and sticks will give customers confidence in your ability to help them with any post-sales service they'll need.

While the music retailing business sometimes seems to be an island unto itself, check out what the other industries selling high-dollar items are doing to market their products. Take some lessons from them. Appeal to the customer's senses and dreams, and transform your drab drum department into a place where fantasies can be nurtured—and ultimately realized.

*Bob Saydlowski, Jr. is marketing manager for Sonor Drums at HSS, Inc.*